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International Terrorism In 1977

A Research Paper

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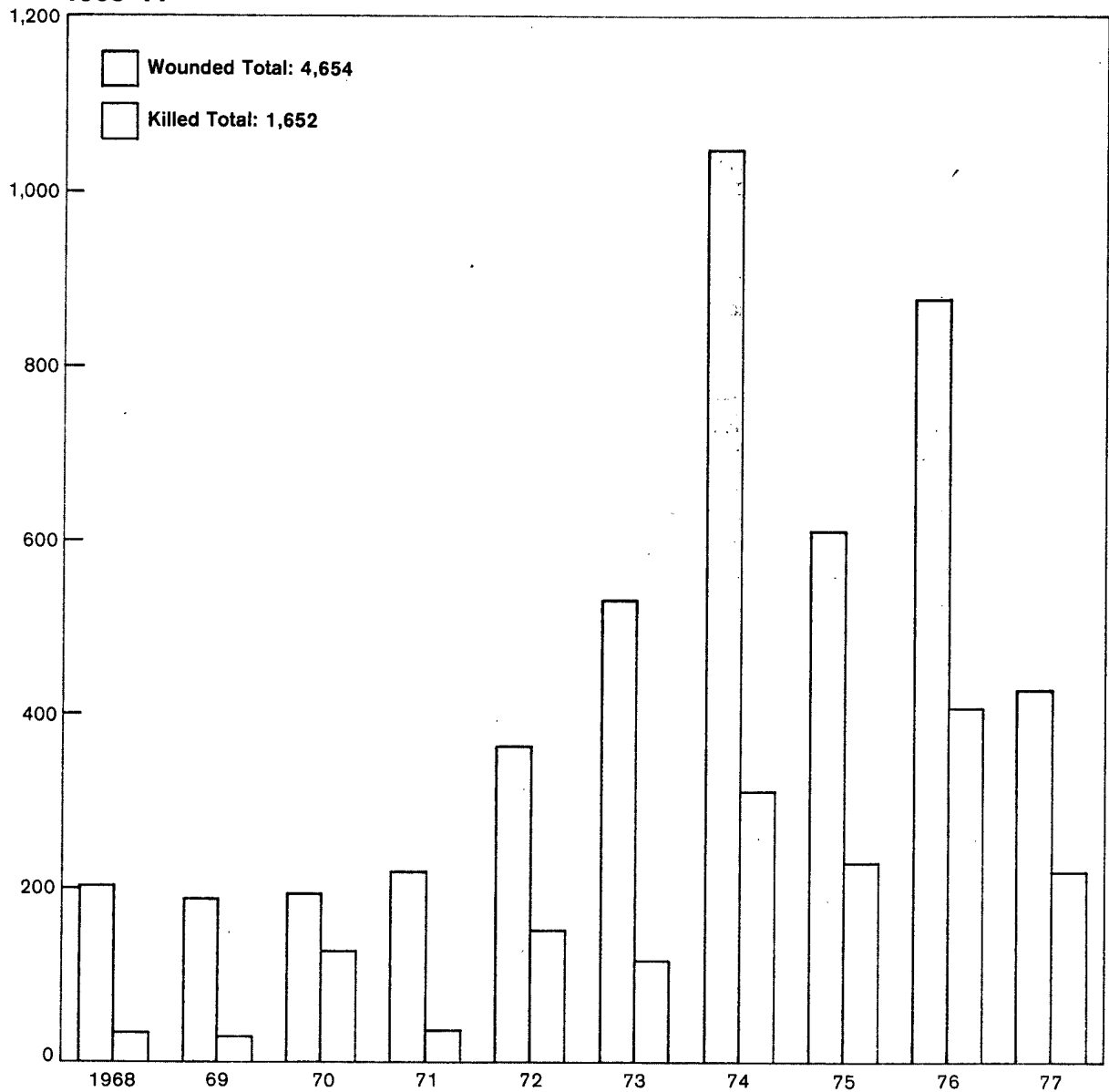
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International Terrorism In 1977

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Figure 1

**Deaths and Injuries
Due to
International Terrorist Attacks,¹
1968-77**



1. Casualty figures are particularly susceptible to fluctuations due to inclusion of especially bloody incidents, e.g., exclusion of the Malaysian hijacking of 1977, which some reports credited to Asian terrorists, would subtract 100 deaths from that year's total.

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International Terrorism In 1977

Introduction

This paper draws upon a conceptual framework developed in two earlier studies: *International and Transnational Terrorism: Diagnosis and Prognosis* (PR 76-10030, April 1976); and *International Terrorism in 1976* (RP 77-10034U, July 1977). It identifies significant trends over the past year in terrorist activities, in governmental support to terrorists, and in international efforts to curb terrorism, and examines the implications of these trends for the remainder of 1978.

Although the definition of terrorism remains unchanged,¹ readers of the previous studies will note differences between statistics presented in the present study and its predecessors. Improved data have led to a considerable expansion of the listings of incidents, as well as a number of deletions (particularly in the case of previously counted hijackings in Eastern Europe, which are now viewed as nonterrorist in nature). Moreover, letterbombings, previously aggregated as a single campaign, are now treated as separate incidents. While acquisition of follow-on accounts of 1977 incidents may over time moderately affect last year's annual tally, no further large changes in the overall data base are anticipated for the near term.

Trends

Developments relating to international terrorism in 1977 showed several major patterns and trends:

- For the year as a whole, there was a decline in the number of international incidents and their attendant casualties (see figures 1 and 2). This decline was

¹ For the purpose of this discussion, *international terrorism* is defined as the threat or use of violence for political purposes when (1) such action is intended to influence the attitude and behavior of a target group wider than its immediate victims, and (2) its ramifications transcend national boundaries (as the result, for example, of the nationality or foreign ties of its perpetrators, its locale, the identity of its institutional or human victims, its declared objectives, or the mechanics of its resolution).

probably in large part due to increased security measures taken by previously victimized governments, coupled with political developments fostering a wait-and-see attitude on the part of terrorists. During the second half of the year, however, the frequency of terrorist incidents jumped to nearly the previous year's record levels. Several spectacular acts—such as the Japanese Red Army (JRA) and Lufthansa hijackings—and bombings protesting the Baader-Meinhof suicides and the Sadat peace initiative occurred toward the end of the year.

- In geographic terms, terrorists continued to prefer operations in the industrialized democracies of Western Europe and North America. More than half of all incidents were recorded in these regions (see figure 3 and table 1 in the appendix).

- There were fewer attacks than the previous year, both in relative and absolute terms, on US citizens and property (see table 2). Increasingly effective preventive measures taken by police and by US Government and business officials were probably the

Figure 2
International Terrorist Incidents,
1968-77

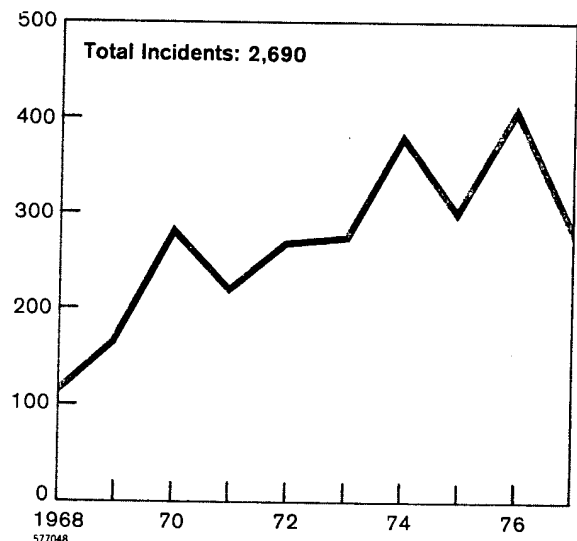


Figure 3
Geographic Distribution of
International Terrorist Incidents,
1968-77

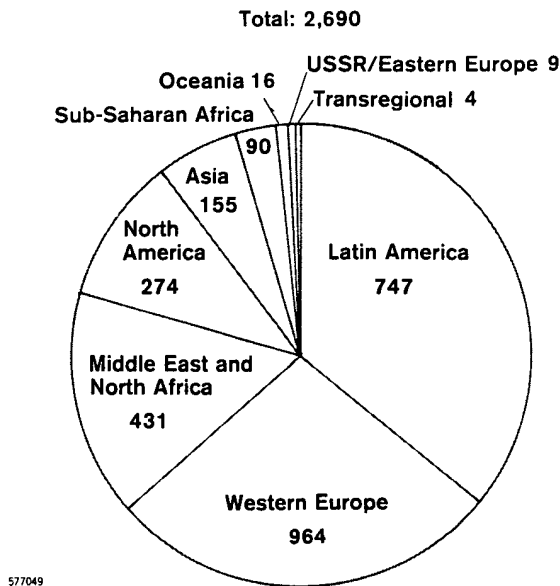
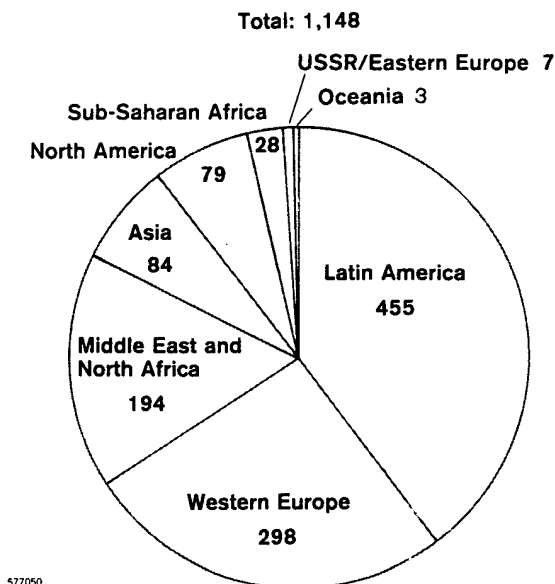


Figure 4
Geographic Distribution of
International Terrorist Attacks
Directed Against US Targets,
1968-77



main reasons for the decrease. American human rights advocacy may also have played a part by making US citizens and installations a more ambiguous and less inviting target than in previous years.

- Terrorism in the Middle East stayed at relatively high levels and again transcended the Arab-Israeli conflict. As in 1976, attacks on fellow Arabs constituted the bulk of fedayeen-related international terrorism. Bombings of Egyptian overseas facilities contributed to an overall increase from 1976 in the number of fedayeen-related attacks.
- While terrorist organizations at times carefully planned and coordinated complex operations, the vast majority of reported attacks continued to be low-risk endeavors, such as bombings, arson, and murder (see table 3). This decline was accompanied by a shift away from well-protected targets to more remote ones not heretofore subjected to attacks. For example, US facilities in isolated rural villages were attacked, while hijackers used smaller airports as their embarkation points.
- Terrorists continued to display a lack of inclination, or perhaps ability, to master and use sophisticated weapons and technology. Terrorist acquisition of such devices and training in their use is frequently reported, but this has not led to their operational deployment. While the West German Red Army Faction threatened to shoot down Lufthansa planes with SA-7 heat-seeking missiles, so far it has not followed up its threat.
- The behavior of hostage takers suggested a heightened sensitivity to the tendency for sympathetic psychological bonds to form between captors and hostages over time. For example, South Moluccans refused to talk to their hostages; Japanese Red Army hijackers wore masks, used numbers to refer to themselves, and initially instructed passengers not to look at them; the Lufthansa hijackers deliberately mistreated passengers and killed the pilot.

Activity of Major International Terrorist Groups

The Palestinian issue continued to be at the heart of most terrorist incidents in or related to the Middle East, with members of the Haddad wing of the radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) being the most active Arab terrorist group.² Since 1973 the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has disavowed international terrorism (but not attacks within Israel or the occupied territories) and has focused on more traditional diplomatic methods in its quest for international recognition. Even the leader of the PFLP has found it necessary to deny that organization's involvement in hijackings engineered by the Haddad faction. Dissidents within the PLO, however, have seriously threatened Yasir Arafat's leadership of the Palestinians and may be successful in their attempts to redirect the PLO's focus to open military confrontation, including a return to international terrorist operations.

The comparative peace experienced in 1976 from attacks by transnational anarchists ended abruptly in 1977 with a spectacular return to the scene by the Japanese Red Army. Its hijacking of a Japanese airliner in Bangladesh embarrassed the Japanese Government, secured the release from Japanese prisons of new operatives for the organization, obtained \$6 million in ransom for the group's coffers, and inadvertently served as a diversion for an abortive coup in Bangladesh. Also in 1977, the JRA announced that it hoped to build a revolutionary base among the Japanese people and appeared to be engaged in a "back to Japan" movement. Its tentative moves toward joint action with Japanese radicals on domestic issues should not be interpreted as a sign that the JRA intends to forsake international operations.

West German terrorists, including remnants of the Baader-Meinhof Gang and its offshoots, overcame the arrests of major leaders and conducted several spectacular attacks within West Germany and, in cooperation with foreign radical groups, in other countries. The kidnapping and murder of prominent West German businessman Hans-Martin Schleyer may signal the development of a new capability by West German anarchists who have previously preferred to engage in bombings.³

Coordinated action by Palestinians and West German anarchists, dramatically demonstrated in the Lufthansa-Schleyer affair,⁴ underlined the continuing trend toward cooperation between international terrorists. Nonetheless, "Carlos," who led the PFLP team that attacked the OPEC ministerial meeting in Vienna in 1975 and has been instrumental in facilitating contacts between terrorist bands, did not surface. He has apparently been unwilling to participate in or engineer any operations since the Vienna attack.

International terrorist attacks by groups that are either based in the United States or have strong organizational links to certain segments of the US population have caused considerable difficulty for the United States Government. Attacks conducted in 1977 by two such groups—Cuban and Croatian exiles—were not as frequent or as serious as those experienced in 1976. Actions by these groups can be expected to increase, however, if US-Cuban relations improve and/or if domestic conflicts flare up in a post-Tito Yugoslavia.

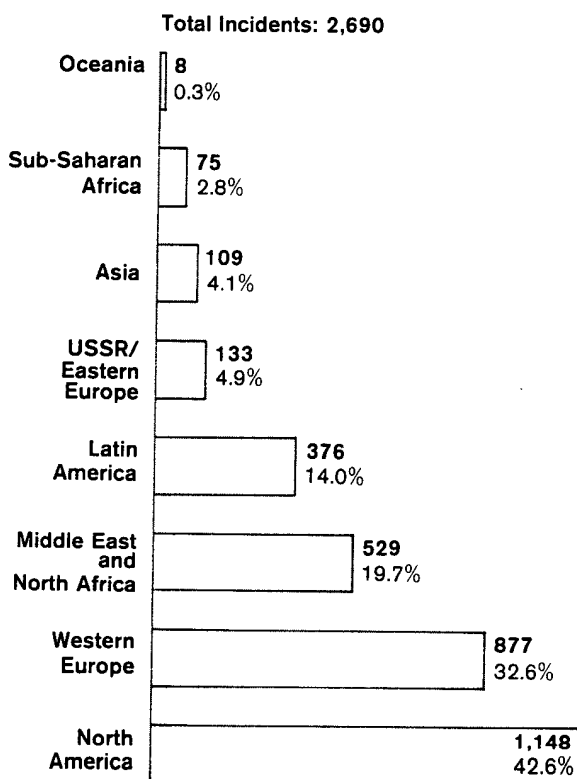
Violence-prone members of the Ananda Marg, an Indian religious sect, conducted attacks on Indian diplomats on several continents, including the United States. To date, the group has not used weapons other than knives, although several of its sympathizers in Asia have been detained on charges of illegal possession of explosives. The group has not attacked non-Indian citizens, but its international membership suggests connections with a farflung support apparatus, and its future actions could involve unintentional victimization of other nationals. Its idiosyncratic, parochial motives, however, make it unlikely that the organization would be willing to cooperate with other terrorist groups.

² The faction was led by Wadi Haddad, who reportedly died of natural causes in an East German hospital in March 1978.

³ The kidnapers of Schleyer demanded the release of their comrades from prison. Until then, kidnapers of businessmen generally demanded ransom, limiting demands for the release of prisoners to instances when they held government officials as hostages.

⁴ On 5 September Schleyer was abducted by members of the Red Army Faction. Five weeks later, a group of Palestinians hijacked a Lufthansa jet out of Mallorca, Spain, to exert additional pressure on the West German Government for the release of incarcerated terrorists and the payment of a sizable ransom.

Figure 5
Nationality of Victims
of International Terrorist Attacks,¹
1968-77



1. The percentage of the total number of incidents around the world appears under the total number of incidents involving victims from that region. Percentages sum to more than 100 due to incidents in which victims were from several regions.

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Governmental Support for Terrorists

Direct governmental support, mainly by radical Arab states, for terrorist groups continued to be most evident and most extensive in the case of Palestinian organizations. Several Third World nations that had previously granted safe haven to radical splinter organizations, however, appeared to be backing off from such overt aid. In these cases, pragmatic calculations of self-interest led to reappraisals of past behavior. Algeria was especially concerned about the unfavorable world reaction generated by its granting asylum to the Japanese Red Army hijackers. Somali cooperation with a West German antiterrorist unit that stormed the Lufthansa plane at Mogadiscio was another example.

Development of Antiterrorist Countermeasures

The development of paramilitary teams to rescue hostages and counter terrorism in general became a source of domestic pride and international prestige to several governments in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East encouraged by the successes of the Israeli mission at Entebbe in 1976 and the more recent West German action at Mogadiscio.

Such special teams and tactics, however, have only limited applicability in coping with the problem of international terrorism. Most incidents—bombings, arsons, sniping—are over too quickly to allow effective use of such groups. In cases involving hostages, the government's desire for international prestige together with domestic pressure may lead to a rescue attempt in inappropriate circumstances, yielding counterproductive results.⁵

Bilateral government cooperation included training of security and antiterrorist personnel and the sharing of intelligence. Despite Cuba's abrogation of an anti-hijacking agreement with the United States on 15 April, Havana continued to refuse safe haven to hijackers, and there were no successful diversions of US aircraft to the island. Finally, several developing

⁵ Paradoxically, the growing unwillingness of LDCs to grant safe haven to terrorists further limits governmental freedom of action by ruling out one nonviolent resolution of terrorist incidents and thus increasing pressure for the use of force.

countries aided Western antiterrorist efforts by denying asylum to hijackers, serving as mediators in the Hanafi siege in Washington, granting permission to conduct rescue operations, and aiding in improving airport security.

At the multilateral level, pressure by a non-governmental organization—the International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations—led to United Nations action. Spurred by the threat of a pilots' strike to protest the killing of the Lufthansa pilot at Mogadiscio, the UN General Assembly and the International Civil Aviation Organization passed resolutions condemning hijacking. The move may have set a precedent—successful use of nongovernmental leverage for international antiterrorism measures.⁶ A West German draft of an international convention against the taking of hostages was less successful and was referred back to the ad hoc General Assembly committee. The Council of Europe's Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, calling for extradition or prosecution of terrorists, came into effect in 1977 when it was ratified by a third signer.⁷ The treaty allows, however, for several exceptions to the extradition clauses. While these measures reflect a growing realization of the need for a global approach to countering terrorism, obstacles to further international cooperation remain—especially disagreements regarding “just” resort to political violence.

Implications for 1978

The 1977 experience with international terrorism, compared with historical events, suggests two basic observations. First, relatively wide fluctuations in the nature and intensity of violence remain evident. Second, the number and character of the groups engaged in international terrorist activity have been constantly changing. Although terrorism has risen from 1960s' levels, the 1970s seem to have produced a cyclical pattern in terms of overall numbers of incidents. Most terrorist campaigns do not appear to be sustainable for more than a few months, as governments adapt to terrorist tactics, group leaders are arrested, and logistic problems arise. In time, however, new terrorist recruits appear and develop new methods—thus the cycle continues.

These oscillations and uncertainties in the pattern and level of terrorist activity render predictions hazardous, although it is clear that the threat will persist. While the precise level and nature of international terrorist activity over the next six months or so cannot be forecast, past experience suggests that:

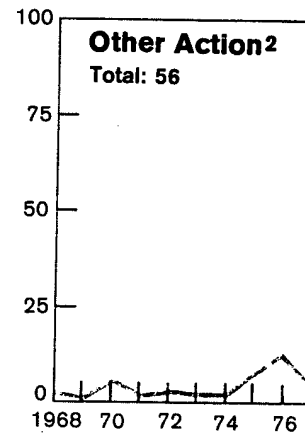
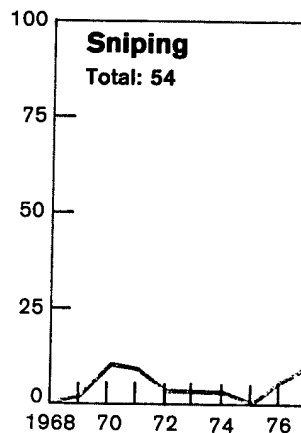
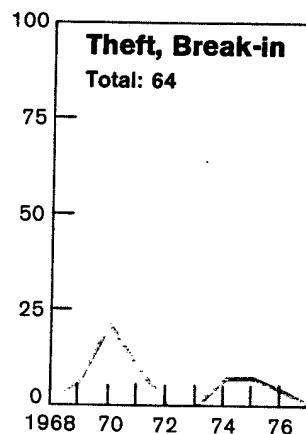
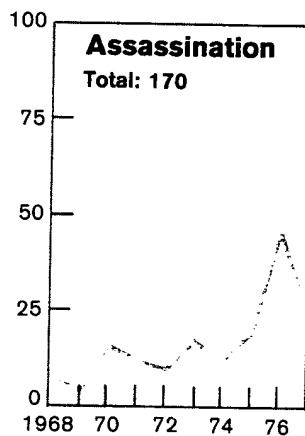
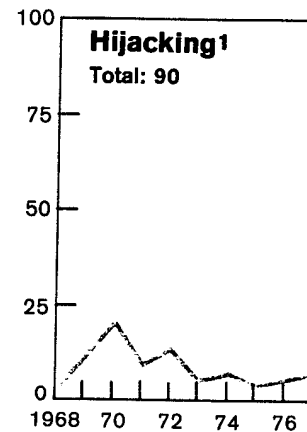
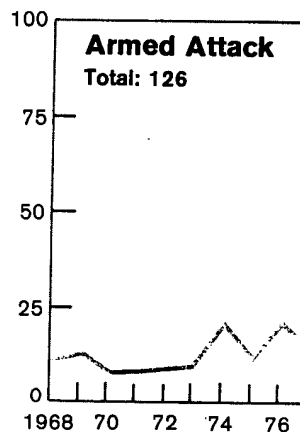
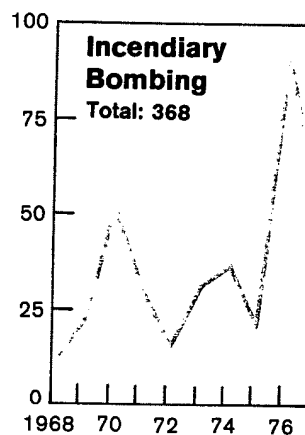
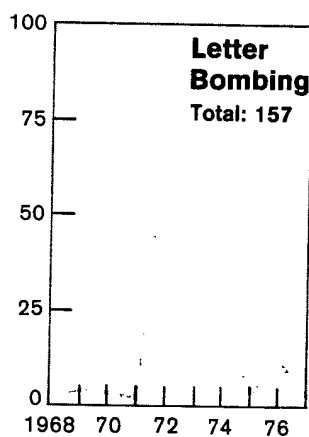
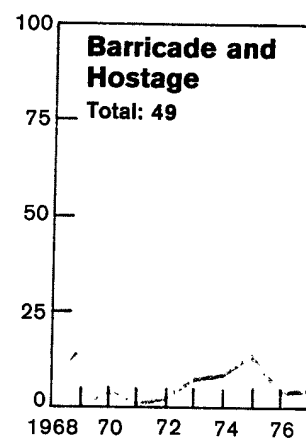
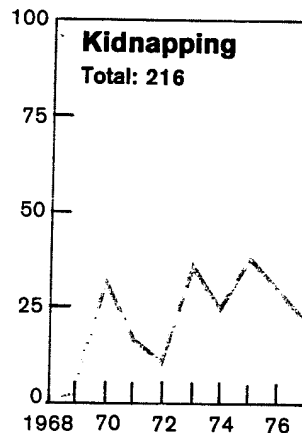
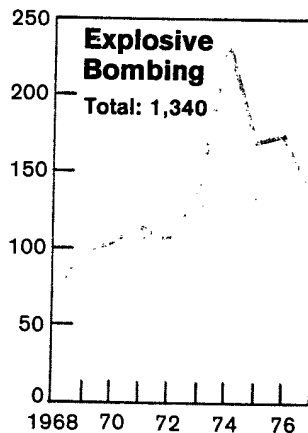
- Regional patterns of victimization and location of operations will remain unchanged. Representatives of affluent countries, particularly government officials and business executives, will continue to be attractive targets. Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East will be the primary arenas of attack. While US official and corporate security will continue to deter potential attackers overseas, American persons and property will continue to be attractive targets.
- Terrorists will shift to alternative targets, rather than retreat from the scene, if their primary goals are unattainable.
- Acts of terrorism related to the Palestinian issue will almost certainly continue. Extremists will seek to demonstrate their rejection of a political solution of the Arab-Israeli dispute, even if this is accepted by the mainstream of the Palestinian movement, the PLO. Recent terrorist activities in the Middle East have focused on President Sadat's overtures to Israel, with Egyptian facilities becoming prime targets. Developments seen by the Palestinians as contrary to their interests could induce even more moderate groups, such as Fatah, to resume terrorist activity outside of Israel.
- Developments in other areas, such as separatist sentiments in Europe or apartheid in South Africa, could motivate terrorist organizations indigenous to the arena of conflict to carry their battles abroad to gain increased international publicity for their cause.
- The vast majority of incidents will continue to involve bombings and incendiary attacks, which will be

⁶ Other nongovernmental groups—including businessmen's associations—were active in pressing governments for more effective protective measures.

⁷ Austria, Sweden, and West Germany have completed ratification.

Figure 6
International
Terrorist Incidents
by Category,
1968-77

Total: 2,690



1. Includes hijacking of modes of transportation for air, sea, or land, but excludes numerous non-terrorist hijackings.

2. Includes occupation of facilities without hostage seizure, shootouts with police, and sabotage.

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of little immediate risk to the terrorists.

- Commemoration of radical martyrs—such as Andreas Baader, Mayir Cayan, and Che Guevara—through the use of violence will continue. There are also likely to be incidents designed to protest specific national or international political developments.
- The development and implementation of more effective international countermeasures will continue to be impeded by differing moral perspectives among states, a broad resistance to the perceived infringement of sovereignty in any curtailment of the right to grant political asylum, and a natural reluctance on the part of many states to commit themselves to any course of action that might invite retribution—either by terrorist groups or by states sympathetic to the terrorists' cause.

The coming year is likely to be characterized by some discontinuities and new developments as well, including:

- The potential use of standoff weapons, such as heat-seeking missiles, to avoid direct confrontations with authorities. One or more groups may overcome their present tactical limitations and moral qualms to master and employ such technologies.
- A further upsurge in West European radical activity. Although the original West German anarchist leaders are dead, their organizations remain a major threat. Difficulties experienced by police in locat-

ing suspects involved in major kidnappings and assassinations have demonstrated the existence of well-organized support networks willing to aid such individuals. The suicides of the Baader-Meinhof leaders, as well as the deaths of the Mogadiscio hijackers, have provided the radical left with a new group of martyrs whose deaths may be avenged by future operations. These may be primarily directed against the governments that aided Bonn in arresting radicals who had fled West Germany.

In sum, the decline in the frequency of international terrorist attacks is expected to level off and may even be reversed. The many issues that have motivated individual terrorists remain unresolved, and new causes will arise. Although added security precautions at sensitive facilities and the use of paramilitary rescue squads may deter spectacular confrontational attacks, these measures clearly cannot protect all potential targets from simple hit-and-run operations.

Appendix

Statistics on International Terrorism

This study employs computerized data that are based solely on unclassified material published during the last decade. While this technique promotes a historical and comparative perspective, the tallies should be treated with caution. The sharp rise in recorded terrorist incidents over the past decade may reflect not only a real increase in such activity, but also more comprehensive and systematic reporting by the press. On the other hand, many incidents probably have not been reported.

In addition, there are many significant gaps in our knowledge about specific incidents and groups, and even those terrorist organizations and actions on which there is reliable information do not always fit neatly into the typologies that have been created for

them.⁸ Moreover, the number of incidents under review is so small that inadvertent omissions or erroneous classification could have a statistically significant impact. In many cases in which the perpetrator is unknown, attribution to terrorists may be misleading. The action may have been undertaken by criminals, psychotics, or revenge-seeking individuals with specific nonpolitical grievances.

⁸ The criteria used in the present study are unavoidably arbitrary. The statistics exclude terrorist attacks on US and allied personnel and installations during the Indochina conflict. They also exclude the assassinations and cross-border operations associated with the Arab-Israeli conflict, unless those incidents either victimized noncombatant nationals of states outside the principal area of conflict or became the object of international controversy. The figures also exclude bombings, shellings, and incursions by conventional forces. Related but separately targeted actions undertaken by a single terrorist group are counted as individual incidents, even when they were staged on the same day and in close proximity to one another. Terrorist operations that miscarried (as opposed to those that were abandoned or countered during the planning or staging phases) are counted.

Table 1

Geographic Distribution of International Terrorist Incidents, 1968-77

Target	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	Total ¹
North America	35	7	23	24	18	18	38	51	37	23	274 (10.2)
Latin America	41	71	113	70	49	80	124	48	105	46	747 (27.8)
Western Europe	16	31	58	38	112	141	151	109	179	129	964 (35.8)
USSR/Eastern Europe	0	1	0	2	1	0	1	2	0	2	9 (0.3)
Sub-Saharan Africa	0	7	8	4	4	4	9	18	16	20	90 (3.3)
Mideast and North Africa	18	32	60	52	35	21	47	56	62	48	431 (16.0)
Asia	1	12	19	24	43	10	11	13	14	8	155 (5.8)
Oceania	0	5	1	2	3	1	1	0	0	3	16 (0.6)
Transregional	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	4 (0.1)
Total	111	166	282	216	269	275	382	297	413	279	2,690

¹ Figures in parentheses are percentages of the total accounted for by each region.

Table 2

International Terrorist Attacks on US Citizens or Property,
1968-77, by Category of Target

Target	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	Total ¹
US diplomatic officials or property	12	17	52	51	22	19	12	12	12	21	230 (20.0)
US military officials or property	4	2	38	36	11	12	12	9	33	10	167 (14.5)
Other US Government officials or property	26	32	57	21	20	10	16	14	2	7	205 (17.9)
US business facilities or executives	6	35	24	40	44	51	86	42	52	33	413 (36.0)
US private citizens	3	7	17	5	12	10	13	27	26	13	133 (11.6)
Total	51	93	188	153	109	102	139	104	125	84	1,148

¹ Figures in parentheses are percentages of the total accounted for by each category of target.

Table 3

International Terrorist Incidents, 1968-77, by Category of Attack

	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	Total ¹
Kidnaping	1	3	32	17	11	37	25	38	30	22	216 (8.0)
Barricade-hostage	0	0	5	1	3	8	9	14	4	5	49 (1.8)
Letter bombing	3	4	3	1	92	22	16	3	11	2	157 (5.8)
Incendiary bombing	12	22	53	30	15	31	37	20	91	57	368 (13.7)
Explosive bombing	67	97	104	115	106	136	239	169	176	131	1,340 (49.8)
Armed attack	11	13	8	8	9	10	21	11	21	14	126 (4.7)
Hijacking ²	3	11	21	9	14	6	8	4	6	8	90 (3.3)
Assassination	7	4	16	12	10	18	12	20	48	23	170 (6.3)
Theft, break-in	3	7	22	10	1	0	8	8	5	0	64 (2.4)
Sniping	3	2	7	3	4	3	3	9	14	6	54 (2.0)
Other actions ³	1	3	11	10	4	4	4	1	7	11	56 (2.1)

¹ Figures in parentheses are percentages of the total accounted for by each category of attack.

² Includes hijackings of modes of transportation for air, sea, or land, but excludes numerous nonterrorist hijackings.

³ Includes occupation of facilities without hostage seizure, shootouts with police, and sabotage.

Table 4

**International Terrorist Attacks on US Citizens or Property,
1968-77, by Category of Attack**

	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	Total ¹
Kidnaping	1	2	17	9	2	20	8	20	7	4	90 (7.8)
Barricade-hostage	0	0	3	0	1	2	2	1	1	3	13 (1.1)
Letter bombing	2	1	2	0	3	0	1	0	2	1	12 (1.0)
Incendiary bombing	12	18	40	26	13	19	25	4	36	24	217 (18.9)
Explosive bombing	30	58	77	93	73	52	90	63	44	35	615 (53.6)
Armed attack	1	4	3	4	6	6	5	3	8	3	43 (3.7)
Hijacking ²	0	4	12	3	4	0	0	2	5	4	34 (3.0)
Assassination	3	2	9	2	2	3	2	7	13	5	48 (4.2)
Theft, break-in	0	3	15	8	0	0	3	3	1	0	33 (2.9)
Sniping	2	1	5	2	2	0	3	1	5	4	25 (2.2)
Other actions ³	0	0	5	6	3	0	0	0	3	1	18 (1.6)
Total	51	93	188	153	109	102	139	104	125	84	1,148

¹ Figures in parentheses are percentages of the total accounted for by each category of attack.

² Includes hijackings of modes of transportation for air, sea, or land, but excludes numerous nonterrorist hijackings, many of which victimized US aircraft.

³ Includes occupation of facilities without hostage seizure, shootouts with police, and sabotage.

Table 5

**Geographic Distribution of International Terrorist Attacks
on US Citizens or Property, 1968-77, by Category of Attack**

	North America	Latin America	Western Europe	USSR/ Eastern Europe	Sub- Saharan Africa	Mideast and North Africa	Asia	Oceania	Total
Kidnaping	0	56	1	0	13	19	1	0	90
Barricade-hostage	3	2	1	0	0	6	1	0	13
Letter bombing	3	2	1	0	2	0	4	0	12
Incendiary bombing	5	59	115	1	3	11	19	4	217
Explosive bombing	62	252	151	0	4	110	33	3	615
Armed attack	0	14	8	0	2	13	6	0	43
Hijacking ¹	5	5	11	0	0	3	10	0	34
Assassination	1	21	5	0	4	12	5	0	48
Theft, break-in	0	23	2	0	0	7	1	0	33
Sniping	0	14	1	1	0	6	3	0	25
Other actions ²	0	7	2	1	0	7	1	0	18
Total ³	79	455	298	3	28	194	84	7	1,148
	(6.9)	(39.6)	(26.0)	(0.3)	(2.4)	(16.9)	(7.3)	(0.6)	

¹ Includes hijackings of modes of transportation for air, sea, or land, but excludes numerous nonterrorist hijackings, many of which victimized US aircraft.

² Includes occupation of facilities without hostage seizure, shootouts with police, and sabotage.

³ Figures in parentheses are percentages of the total accounted for by each region.

Table 6

Geographic Distribution of International Terrorist Incidents,
1968-77, by Category of Attack

	North America	Latin America	Western Europe	USSR/ Eastern Europe	Sub- Saharan Africa	Mideast and North Africa	Asia	Oceania	Trans- regional	Total
Kidnaping	2	117	20	0	34	32	10	1	0	216
Barricade-hostage	4	6	20	0	2	14	3	0	0	49
Letter bombing	13	9	76	0	12	6	37	0	4	157
Incendiary bombing	23	67	222	2	4	21	25	4	0	368
Explosive bombing	190	372	492	4	8	222	42	10	0	1,340
Armed attack	2	25	26	1	10	54	8	0	0	126
Hijacking ¹	5	21	19	0	7	23	15	0	0	90
Assassination	14	53	55	0	11	27	9	1	0	170
Theft, break-in	3	37	8	0	0	14	2	0	0	64
Sniping	10	26	5	1	1	8	3	0	0	54
Other actions ²	8	14	21	1	1	10	1	0	0	56
Total	274	747	964	9	90	431	155	16	4	2,690

¹ Includes hijackings of modes of transportation for air, sea, or land, but excludes numerous nonterrorist hijackings.

² Includes occupation of facilities without hostage seizure, shootouts with police, and sabotage.